



BRIAN K. VAUGHAN
FIONA STAPLES



FS'12

Saga™

CHAPTER
THREE

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Saga

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My mom once said
the hardest part of
parenting is knowing
when to ask
for help.

Please...
please don't
kill me.

Please
don't orphan
my girl.

Even the most independent of new parents will need backup weathering the occasional shitstorm.



It doesn't take a village to raise children, it takes a whole galaxy-former friends, random acquaintances, complete strangers...



... even other children.





No,
you're...
you're
Horrors.

Is that
seriously what
you guys call
indigenous
peoples?

That's kind
of racist, don't
you think?



You're
monsters.

Marko said
you *slaughter*
innocent men
and women.

Nah, we can *project*
some nasty stuff
into outsiders' heads,
but that's just
an illusion.

After us locals die, we get to live on
as "spiritual defenders of Cleave."

But clearly, that's a suck-ass
evolutionary plan, since your two
armies had no problem wiping
our people off the map.



I swear
to you, we
have nothing
to do with
this war.

We just
want to
take care
of our--

hzi...



...how's...
hazel...?



She's fine.

She's got the only decent man in the universe for a daddy.



He looks like the ones who burned our village.

Just 'cause we can understand these two doesn't mean they're good guys.

But he's not. You heard how sweet he was with his kid, right?

Whatever, I don't wanna be here when the horned one kicks.



They can't hurt us, you big babies! We're *intangible*!

Why are you guys acting like you just died yesterday?

So... sorry...



Shut up with that. What about a spell? You said you knew *healing spells*, right?

...no... only one ingredient... for wounds this bad...

What? What do you need me to get?



...SHOW...



Marko, it's
sweltering
out.
I, I don't
even know
where to find
water.

I can
get you
what you
need.



For a
price.



Talk
fast.

You two are
trying to find
a way off my
stupid planet,
right?

Take
me with
you.



Yeah, sure, welcome
to the family...
now give me my
snow.

It's not that simple.
I'm connected to Cleave,
so I can only leave if I'm
bonded to the soul of
a living native.

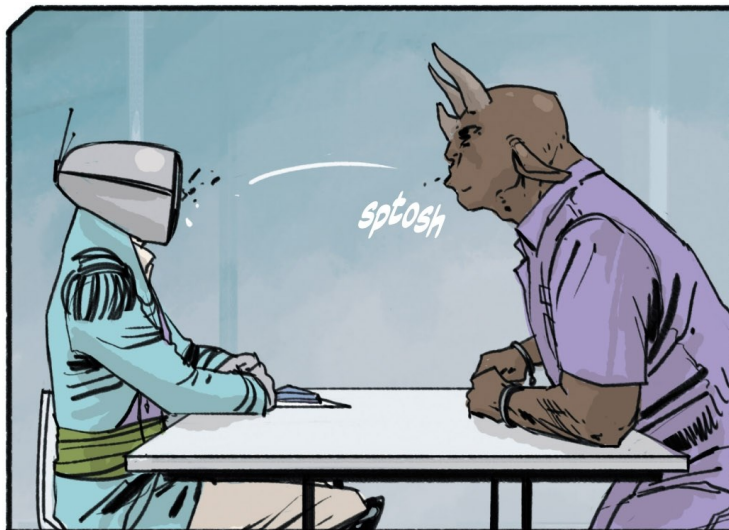
So? I
wasn't born
here.



Wasn't
talking about
you.

Despite what you
may have heard,
good help isn't
all that hard
to find...









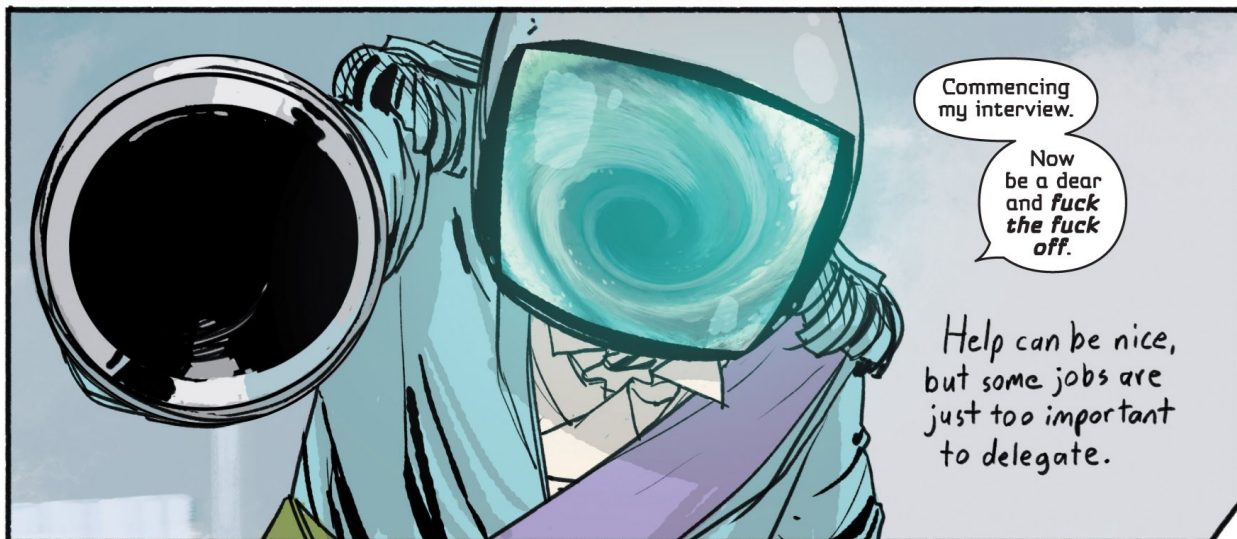
har
"Humane."



Your
majesty!



What
the heck
are you
doing?



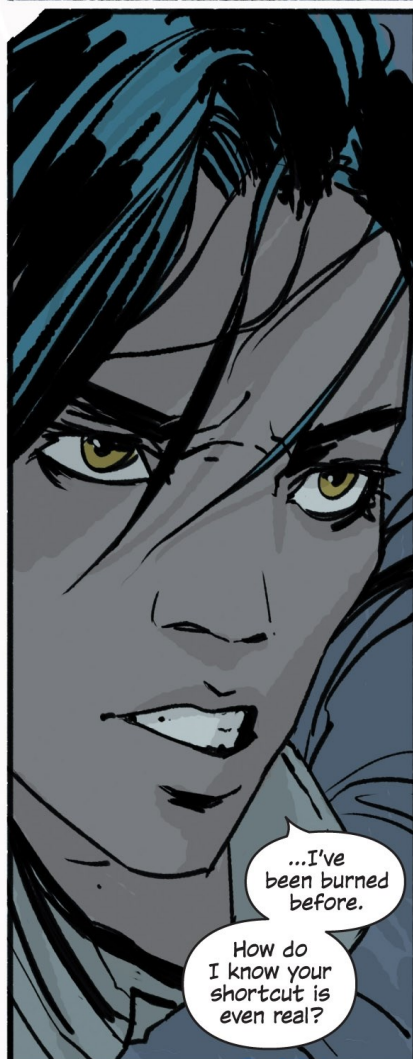
Commencing
my interview.

Now
be a dear
and **fuck
the fuck
off.**

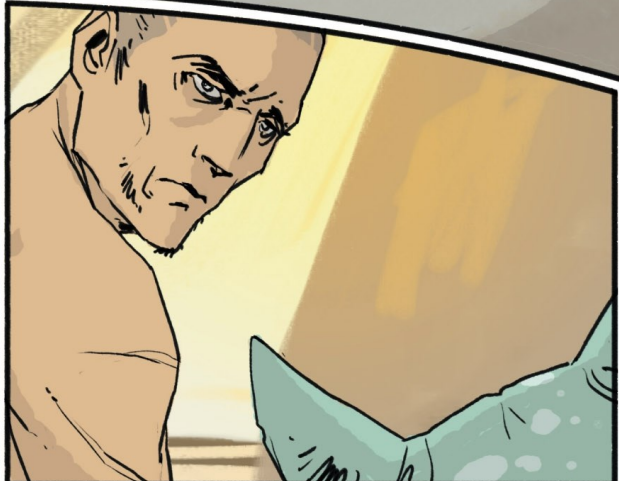
Help can be nice,
but some jobs are
just too important
to delegate.









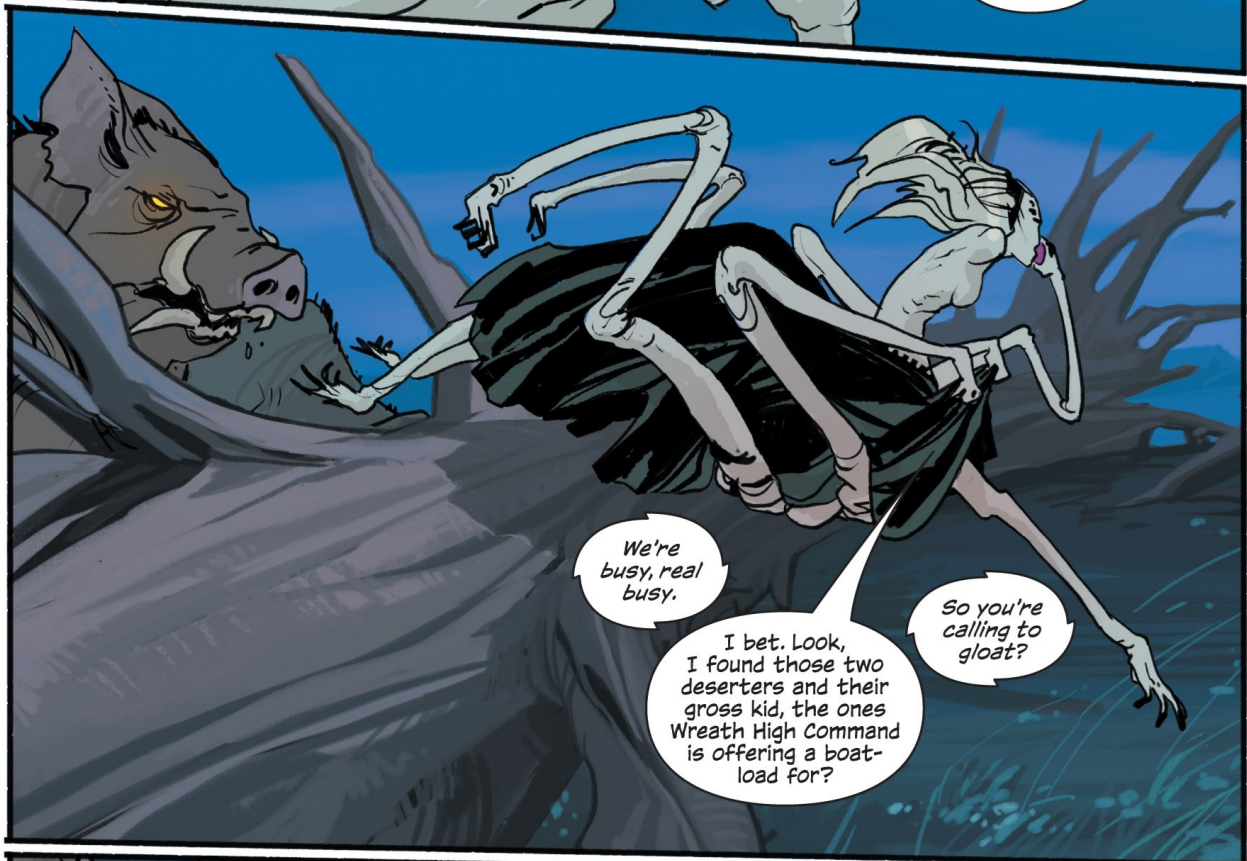




What do you want?

Nice to hear you, too, Will.

How's my favorite duo these days?



We're busy, real busy.

So you're calling to gloat?

I bet. Look, I found those two deserters and their gross kid, the ones Wreath High Command is offering a boat-load for?



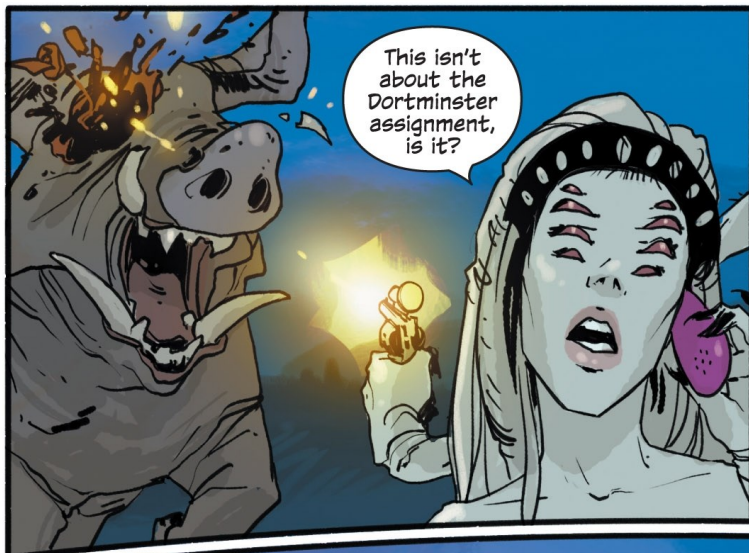
I found them, but I haven't captured them...yet.

This planet is trickier than I thought. I could use a **partner**.

Actually, maybe it'd be best if you and I just kept our distance.



What...?













Who the
fuck is
Gwendolyn?

TO BE CONTINUED

4335 VAN NUYS BOULEVARD • SUITE 332 • SHERMAN OAKS • CA 91403

Man, I can't believe how many of you still own stamps.

Brian here, writing this days before the release of our second chapter(with our first issue incomprehensibly already in its third printing). Your physical letters have just started flooding Saga HQ, and I know I speak for the whole team when I say that you guys are as awesome as your handwriting is atrocious. Thanks so much to the insane number of you from around the globe who took the time to send something our way.

All right, enough of this palaver. Loyal sidekick Hamburger K. Vaughan, fetch us something from the Missive Pile...

Dear Sir:

I just wanted to write to say that I love the first issue of **Saga** and I am (as always) impressed with the originality of BKV's ideas and Fiona Staples artwork (so wonderful and not like anything I've seen before). I am definitely looking forward to reading more!

The only downside is that the ink on the cover came off on my fingers a lot, so the white portions of the front, and all of the back, cover now have dirty/inky fingerprints all over them (and this COULD be a collectors' item someday! *sigh*). I suppose I should have realized I had to wear gloves to read it?

Congratulations on creating something special/unique!

Sincerely,

Maribeth Martell

Fairfield, IA

Sorry about your cover, Maribeth, but at least your reluctance to see your grubby fingerprints all over someone else's story means that you're in no danger of becoming a Hollywood executive anytime soon. So congrats.

Hi, BKV!

Mabuhay! Greetings from the Philippines!

Just read **Saga** #1 and it was AMAZING!!! So frikkin happy you're back! Sorry this letter is hand-written. (My grandmother used to say that typed letters aren't that special anymore...) Saw the **To Be Continued** part and I just had to write! Been following your work since forever! WELCOME BACK! It really is just a pleasure having you back! It feels like I haven't seen a cousin for a long time! Can't wait to read more **Saga**! Staples is awesome! Her art just suits the story! Congratulations! You must be proud of the book! You made me a real happy fanboy! Happy to be part of the **SAGA** FAMILY!

Best,

Jiggy A. Cruz

Quezon City, Philippines

P.S. You mentioned the name Aquino in **Y: The Last Man**. President Aquino was my grandmother. She passed away in 2009. She would've been mad if I wrote to you using Microsoft Word! Glad to have you back BKV! It's been too long!

Mabuhay, Jiggy! How cool to hear from a descendent of the leader of the People Power Revolution. You, sir, are officially this month's Reader With the Most Famous Relative. Any takers for June...?

Hi, Brian and Fiona,

I've been excited about **Saga** since I first heard you were making it. I've been a big fan of your work, Brian, since *Runaways* and having read this first issue I am, if possible, more excited now. Fiona, your art is wonderful; I'm going to have to track down the rest of it now.

Cocktail recipe!

In the spirit of parents, here is a drink I named after my mom, whose name I will refrain from printing here. Go to www.prometheussprings.com and find out where you can get the Lemon Ginger kind. Whole Foods is usually a good bet. Then, in a shaker full of ice mix:

- 1 part Prometheus Lemon Ginger
- 1 part bourbon
- 4 or 5 sprigs of bruised cilantro

Shake well, strain into glass, and serve.

Looking forward to issue 2!

Sincerely yours,

Francis Delaney

Jamaica Plain, MA

My chilluns are down for the night, so I just fixed myself one of Francis' Anonymous Mothers, and enjoyed it immensely. Thank you for your excellent taste, especially because a worrying number of you "mature readers" seem to think that a cocktail involves suiciding Diet Pepsi with Sierra Mist at Quiznos. Let's step it up, problem drinkers!

Dear Fiona and Brian,

I am, as the kids say these days, completely "cracked-out" on your book **Saga**! I even made my girlfriend read the first issue right after I did. Although the robot sex scene has her now wondering about the kind of "stuff" that I'm into. Oh well, you guys are still awesome. Keep it up!

Joe

Los Alamitos, CA

Joe is apparently a dentist here in California, and was kind enough to enclose some brochures about Handling Your Child's Dental Emergency, a sentence that hurts my fucking face just to type. I'm with your girlfriend, Doc. You are indeed into some twisted stuff.

Dear BKV,

I noticed that there are winged horses on Landfall. Presumably those are just dumb animals. But there are also anthropomorphic monkeys and alligators who are clearly intelligent. So I have to know, are there anthropomorphic horses, and do they ride the regular winged horses? Because that would be like Quick Draw McGraw riding a Pegasus, and that is a comic book I want to read.

Love,
Vida VanDaugh,
Maryland

Vida, your handwriting is curiously similar to that of my lifelong nemesis/brother David Vaughan. He's also a resident of Maryland, so if you happen to see him around, be sure to ask about the time he was so terrified by an episode of Twin Peaks that he had to sleep in his brother's room. His younger brother's room. Yes, everyone was scared of Bob behind that couch, but David must have been sixteen years old at the time, Vida. Sixteen...

Brian,

I love to travel and I imagine characters from your stories in places I've visited, mostly in Europe and mostly characters from **Y: The Last Man**.

I'll be taking a trip to Peru soon. It will be my first time in South America. I'm thrilled! I'll visit the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu.

I'm excited with the characters in **Saga**, I'll be taking them along to Peru to enjoy some high altitude air.

Ciao!
Alexandra A.
San Diego, CA

Hold on, why do my stupid characters get to hopscotch around the planet while I'm trapped in the godforsaken San Fernando Valley? Do you really think Marko and Alana are going to appreciate the sites of Peru more than I would, Alexandra? They are from a FUCKING OUTER SPACE GALAXY OF MAGIC.

Sorry. Should never have had that third Anonymous Mother.

Greetings:

This is my first time writing into a letter column, but I had to do it because I love **Saga**! The art is sublime and the writing is magnificent. I've always loved your writing, **Runaways** was one of my first comic books ever. I had to stop buying comics a while back, but I'm back on. **Saga** looks like it's going to be a wonderful epic, I'm proud to be a member of the tribe!

Your eager reader,

Dante
Caguas, Puerto Rico

P.S. Hope you enjoy the incense! I didn't know what else to send.

Thanks, Dante! The last time I got "Puerto Rican incense" in the mail, the authorities were involved, but your note was most appreciated.

And lest everyone think that we received nothing but gifts and praise, here are a couple of letters from readers with dreaded "concerns":

Brian,

I read and enjoyed the first issue of **Saga**. Not sure if I'm in yet for the long haul.

Here's what I liked:

– You're doing some great world building. You've set up an intriguing sci-fi/fantasy universe. The naked prejudice against certain races is fascinating. Why such divisive hatred between particular groups? Is it based on physical features? History? Culture? Wealth? I get the idea that Marko and Alana are not only unusual in the fact that they had a child together, but that they even had a romance at all. I want to not only see how this world develops, but how it got there.

– The art. Fiona Staples has a bold and striking art style, with convincing body language and facial expressions. Art-wise, this book is in great hands. If possible, I'd like never to see a fill-in artist.

Here's what I liked less:

– Man this book is weird. Will the cultures and strange physical features of the characters ever be explored or explained? Or is it just an acid trip, shut-up-and-roll-with-it book? The monitor-head beings are easily the strangest things in the book. They're so bizarre they don't fit the rest of the universe you're building, I think. I hope you explain who they are and how they work, they're outlandish and look like something out of a Crispin Glover video. Just way too out-there for me.

– Marko is a character-type you have featured before, and not one of my favorites. He seems to be a testosterone-free girl-man who is mind-numbingly "sensitive." Yorick from the great **Y: The Last Man** was like this. Feeble and effeminate with no trace of masculinity. I hope he turns out more leading man and less hipster doofus. Show us why Alana fell for him, because I don't see it in his personality here.

– The strange mixture of our "real" world and a fantasy world. It's odd to hear a fairy with wings and a man-ram hybrid cursing in English. And what's with the anti-gun comments about keeping guns in the home? The blatant use of liberal propaganda statistics in the middle of a fantasy tale ripped me right out of the story. What were you trying to accomplish with that comment? If their planet is anything like Earth, can another character point out to Marko statistics regarding how many lives are saved each year by having access to a gun in the home for protection?

Also, is Marko an honorable character? He made a vow that his blade would never again leave his scabbard—kind of a dumb thing to do if you live in precarious situations and you still carry the weapon around with you. Later in the story, he was awfully quick to go for his sword (as he should have been) when he thought his newborn daughter was in danger. Will he realize how dumb his vow was and renounce it, or just break it regularly without caring? Does he know what a vow is? The answer will reveal a lot about his character and be an indication of whether or not I want to stay with the book.

It's too early to judge **Saga** or determine what story you are trying to tell. Are you being ironic? Literal? Is this all tongue-in-cheek parody that is not meant to be taken too seriously? Is the entire story from Hazel's POV or will you be bouncing around? Will there be fully realized characters (something at which you excel) or is this just a black and white good guy/bad guy story? I'm not sure of these things yet, nor am I sure **Saga** is for me. But because I generally enjoy your work, I will give it a chance until I find out. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Jerry Smith
Erlanger, KY

Dear 'Ed,'

Here's an old school letter, hand-written, and sent by the postal service... Enjoyed the first issue of **Saga**, especially the Lying Cat. But slightly concerned at the presence of several mundane Earth-bound items—what looked like an iPhone with apps, an ATM, and cigarettes. This rather distracts from the otherworldliness of other worlds—I think of Darth Vader drawing cash from an ATM and consider the effect that would have on **Star Wars**. In any case, robots are great, some meaty monsters, and Staples' art is fantastic!

All the best,
Simon Werrett
Seattle, WA

Thanks for the thoughtful letters, Jerry and Simon. I always prefer to let our story speak for itself, but I'll say one thing: While I was fully anticipating people being uncomfortable with our graphic robot fucking, I was ill-prepared for the amount of controversy concerning the presence of automatic teller machines in a sci-fi/fantasy universe. Fascinating to hear how much of the "real world" people are comfortable having bleed into a genre that's traditionally been about escaping it. Can't wait to see how many readers we shed with this issue's supermarket paperback!

Regardless, I'm heartened to read the continuing universal adoration for Fiona Staples' artwork. Not to raise expectations too high, but her cover for our next chapter might be my favorite piece of art by any living painter.

Oh, and for the many of you who wrote in to ask who's behind **Saga**'s striking logo and classy chapter headings, that would be none other than our own Fonografiks, undisputed master of the mixed-case font.

BKV!

I just set down the most recent issue of **Saga**, and I couldn't resist writing you a letter to congratulate you and the rest of your team on your awesome comic book. Anyway, I was wondering if you watched Saturday morning cartoons as a kid? And did they have any influence on you later in life?

Sincerely,
Ezra Schott
Berkeley, CA

Hey, Ezra! I liked a ton of Saturday morning cartoons, but not as much as I loved weekday afternoon cartoons (especially when sandwiched between rounds of Bozo's shitty Grand Prize Game), and not nearly as much as I now revere late night cartoons like The Venture Bros.

Maybe I'm just not a morning person.

Dear Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples,

I was just writing to let you know that I think your new comic, **Saga**, is great. You guys did a great job with the first issue and I'm really looking forward to future issues.

Ms. Staples, this is my first experience with your work, but I will definitely be googling you and getting my hands on your other work (I don't know why but that came out as kinda creepy! Sorry ☹)

Mr. Vaughan, **Runaways** was the first graphic novel I ever read and I LOVED it. I even got my husband to read it and he fell in love with it too. In fact, to this day, it remains my husband's favorite, and in fact, I still have to hear him bitch about how Marvel is no longer publishing it. To him the Runaways are like close friends who moved away and never call or answer their email.

We also read **Y: The Last Man** and really enjoyed it. That comic opened up a dialog between us that ranged from modern sexism, Israel's relationship with Palestine, and gay rights to more philosophical conversations about the whole human experience and the message you were trying to convey to the reader. Thank you for that.

It's been a long time, but you're back with this great new series, and personally, the timing couldn't be better! You see, my husband and I just had our first child 2 months ago. We had a little boy, his name is Sam, he is the greatest thing ever! And it's great that we get to read this awesome comic by you, a writer we both love, that's about a young couple and their new child. So thank you guys! We look forward to seeing this story evolve along with our family!

Sincerely,
Karen McDonough
Stevinson, CA

Congrats, Karen! Your exceptionally kind words and the miraculous birth of your adorable firstborn reminded me of something important:

TARGETED MARKETING.

What would my fellow new parents out there think of some nice **Saga**-themed swag, maybe a cool sling like Alana's? Or

for you happily childless consumers, some sweet Saga action figures, perhaps?

Or, should we maintain the dignified Bill Watterson stance, eschewing crass commercialization of our characters entirely?

Dear Brian and Fiona,

Oh, man, I really liked the first issue of **Saga**! I went to the comic shop the day issue #1 came out with a half dozen other guys and everybody picked it up – except me! I’m about to move and wanted to dodge buying another epic series in single issues. But I borrowed my buddy, Sean’s, copy and fell in love. (I also bent Sean’s copy, but don’t tell him.)

This book is so rad! A poop joke on the first page! Gorgeous art by Fiona! Amazing word balloon placements! That incredible job Brian does of walking the line between cheeky and clever dialogue! A talking monkey! Science vs. Magic! Treasure maps! Bros with TV heads! Alligator butlers! Impossible babies between races! A rocketship forest! A big ol’ lie-detecting kitty! A monster who breathes fire wearing a thumb ring! Unicorn grandmas! Glowing eyeballs on the last page! And my favorite — The Will! Can’t wait to learn more about that dude! Did everybody see his cape has a cowl mask stitched into it?! When’s he gonna pull that on?! AGHHH!

Great, great job, everybody. I’m officially a fan. Went back and bought myself a copy at the store. I’ll make room at my new place for 300 issues of this dope new series.

Thanks!

Rickey Purdin

Lodi, NJ

We got a lot of spectacular original art in the mail, including Rickey’s humdinger drawing of The Will:



Sorry for my crummy snapshot. See above, re: bourbon.

Anyway, Rickey, if only for your irrational excitement about

the mere possibility of a character donning the cowed mask stitched to his cape, Hamburger has chosen YOU as our first big winner of something from the Almighty Prize Drawer.

This month, that means you’re about to become the proud owner of a signed copy of **Saga** with my own (vastly inferior) sketch of The Will, some old necktie, a mostly empty pack of Dentyne Ice, Gli Escapisti (a nice Italian edition of the **The Escapists** graphic novel I did with Steve Rolston, Jason Shawn Alexander, and Philip Bond for Michael Chabon and Dark Horse), one Person of Interest branded room key from the last Comic-Con, and a cigar shaped like a giant baseball bat.

We hope these items bring you much joy if and when we ever remember to go the post office.

Sorry that’s all the time I had for sober transcription this month, but we’ll try to run many more of your letters in thirty days, when **The Will** finally reaches the planet Sextillion. Come on, like you’re not coming back to see that.

We leave you with this stunning sketch of Alana that Image stalwart Riley Rossmo (Proof, **Green Wake**) was gracious enough to give Fiona at her local comic book store.



Seriously, I love you, comics.

Off to bed,
Brian

Question of the Month

"It was a Batman comic of some kind that included a detailed look at the compartments of the utility belt. I was completely fascinated by the idea of smoke grenades, a mini-camera, batarangs, and everything else all hidden inside these tiny cylinders."

Landry Walker
DANGER CLUB

"WHAT WAS YOUR COMICS GATEWAY DRUG?"

"I picked up Sonic the Hedgehog at K-Mart with my Mom while waiting for my brother Chris to be finished with a birthday party. Hooked ever since!"

Shane Houghton
REED GUNTHER

"Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars. It had the best heroes and the baddest villains beating the stuffing out of each other. I was hooked for life."

Sam Humphries
SACRIFICE

"Star Wars comics, then Rom and Micronauts. Oddly enough, superheroes did not come until later."

John Layman
CHEW

"Aquaman! Years later, I still have a crush on that shiny goldfish."

Colleen Doran
A DISTANT SOIL

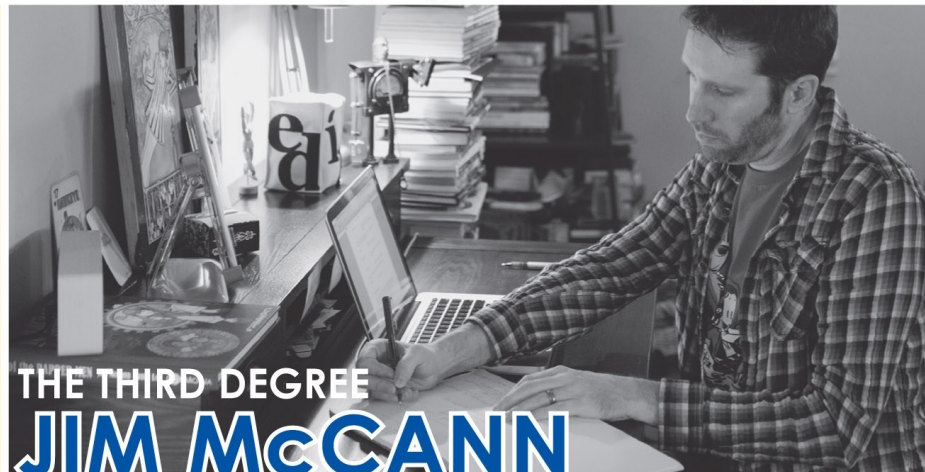
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THE THIRD DEGREE JIM McCANN

Jim McCann is the writer of Image Comics' new series *Mind the Gap*. Other comics he has written include *Return of the Dapper Men* (Archaia) and *Hawkeye and Mockingbird* (Marvel). Fun fact about Jim: He also wrote for the ABC daytime drama *One Life to Live*. He lives in New York City. Follow him on Twitter -- @JimMcCann. His website is www.jimmccannonline.com.

What are you working on right now?

I'm in the middle of three different creator-owned projects at the moment and they are all exciting—one is a secret; the other is the second book in the *DAPPER MEN* series, *TIME OF THE DAPPER MEN*; and my first ongoing series at Image, *MIND THE GAP*.

What's the best part of your job?

The fact that the dream I've had since I was 10 years old has come true. I still get excited every time a new page of art comes in that's a visual of something I've written.

What's the worst part of your job?

I'm a really happy guy, so this is tough. If I had to pick out something I guess it would be that I'm not very good at setting specific "working hours," so I feel like there's not really time off.

How did you first discover comics?

Summer camp. They had comics in the infirmary and I used to pretend I was really sick because then I could read comics. And it had air conditioning.

If you weren't working in comics, what would you be doing?

Probably working in theater. Or busting my butt to get in the door in comics!

What's the strangest thing a fan has ever said to you?

Some guy at a panel asked a question about a controversial storyline Marvel was doing. I answered, and he yelled "You're a coward!" And then he ran out of the room, defining the word coward.

What are you most likely to complain to an editor about?

I'm getting better, but it's hard for me to separate getting notes as being something to make the story better as opposed to seeing it as places I failed the story.

What is the single work of which you're most proud?

RETURN OF THE DAPPER MEN. It was my first time stepping out and telling a story that was purely created by myself (and co-creator/artist Janet Lee) as opposed to working in someone else's sandbox.

Who is the biggest influence on your work?

Probably my dad was. But as for influences on my writing... Ross Macdonald, Raymond Chandler, Richard Stark, Patricia Highsmith, Milan Kundera, Alan Moore, and Johnny Craig.

Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.

Until it was cancelled recently, I loved the soap opera *One Life to Live*.

What was the last comic book you bought?

Fatale #2.

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

Roger Rabbit.

Pick three things you couldn't live without.

Macaroni & Cheese, Dr. Pepper, and oxygen.

What's the strangest thing you have in your house?

I don't know about strangest, but my blind cat is pretty freaking amazing. She is like *Daredevil* — you'd never know she's blind.

When was the last time you laughed out loud?

All the time, usually something on YouTube involving stars falling on a runway or on stage.

What music are you listening to these days?

A lot of music scores and music from the '40s. Both help me write.

What is your favorite film of all time?

AARGH! I hate picking these! Probably *All About Eve*. By the time this prints, that answer will probably be different.

Who is your best friend?

My incredible spouse.

What is the worst advice you've ever received?

"No, I swear, you'll LOVE the Goat Cheese in this." (I hate goat cheese.)

When was the last time you were truly frightened?

When *DAPPER MEN* went to the printer and I had no idea if people would like it.

Name someone you really admire and explain why.

Katharine Hepburn. She always did things her way. And early in her career, after a few successes and then a few flops, she was labeled "Box Office Poison." So she took her fate into her own hands, bought the film rights to *The Philadelphia Story*, and made the greatest comeback ever.

What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?

Fans & retailers taking chances on creator-owned books. If you like someone's work on one of the "Big Two's" characters, come see what they do with their own imagination. A healthier market in general. And for *MIND THE GAP* to be on issue 12.

What the world needs now is...

For me to stop rambling. And cheaper airfare so I can see more of it. (The world, not my rambling)

MIND THE GAP #1



After Elle Peterssen is mysteriously attacked on a Manhattan subway platform, she is left in a coma, the only clues to her attacker trapped inside her mind. No one knows the identity of the person behind this brutal beating or where they will strike next. In this ALL-NEW ONGOING series, everyone is suspect, and no one is innocent.

YOUNGBLOOD #71



It's the 20th anniversary of the comic book that launched the Image Revolution in 1992! *ROB LIEFFELD'S YOUNGBLOOD* returns bigger and better than ever with an all-new look at the next generation of superheroes, courtesy of screenwriter JOHN McLAUGHLIN (*Black Swan*, *Parker*), up-and-coming artist JON MALIN and *YOUNGBLOOD* creator and Image founder ROB LIEFFELD!

DANCER #1



Retired assassin Alan Fisher and his ballerina companion must escape a ruthless sniper who stalks them through the streets of Milan. To survive and protect the love of his life, Alan will unravel the tapestry of the past he's kept hidden and discover the killer's impossible identity. From the writer of *WHO IS JAKE ELLIS?* and the artist of *VIKING* comes a spy thriller with a 21st Century twist.

EPIC KILL #1



Hitmen and mercenaries from around the globe are ordered by the President to bring down an eighteen-year-old super assassin named Song — but she's going to turn the tables on them — and every kill is going to be epic! Song has trained for years into adulthood to take revenge on the man responsible for her parents' deaths — the man who has just been elected President!

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NATHAN FOX



EXPERIENCE CREATIVITY

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